

# FOLK-LORE AND THE MENANGKABAU CODE IN THE NEGRI SEMBILAN.

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The Negri Sembilan, unlike the other Protected States of the Malay Peninsula, has not yet quite got away from the traditions which prevailed amongst the Aboriginal tribes; these traditions were partly adopted and somewhat modified by the colonists from other States of the Peninsula and from Sumatra; who, as the Resident, the Hon. Martin Lister, has pointed out in a paper communicated to the Society in 1887, "fell in with the Aboriginal views, and observed their rights to all waste lands, and their power in each State" but at the same time "brought their tribal laws with them."

It is well known that the primitive Malays of Sumatra practised exogamy, and—like all other exogametic races inter-tribal marriage was one of the most heavily punished offences.

When I went to the District of Kinta, Perak, in 1884, and was engaged in settling native Malay claims to mining lands, it puzzled me at first to understand the term "*Waris Kinta*," which was often quoted by native mine owners, and when I was transferred to an appointment in the Negri Sembilan, I remember that the late Sir Frederick Weld told me that one of the chief reasons why he had selected me, was, because there were few men in the service who could distinguish between a *Waris* and a *Lembaga*. I am afraid I looked confused, and I know that as soon as I got back to my Hotel, I looked in my "Swettenham" and found that the word *Lembaga* meant somebody who had something to do in the affairs of the State. I had not lived long in Tampin, and mixed in Rembow and Gemenchek affairs before the distinction was made quite clear to me.

In 1890 Mr. Lister communicated a further paper to the Society, enlarging on the subject, shewing how the Sakais were merged in the Bidwandas, and how the constitution was established on Menangkabau lines.

My purpose in the present instance is to try and trace through the Folk-lore of the country, the why and wherefore of certain customs, which, always stronger than written laws, have made the country what it is, a very favorite resting place for Malays, because of the conservation of such customs; in doing this, I shall endeavour to explain, as far as I am able, a few old fashioned sayings, which are even now less quoted than they used to be a few years ago.

Tengku Sayid Abdollah bin Sayid Saban, the Assistant Magistrate of Tampin, has greatly assisted me in the work, by explaining what seemed to me obscure in some of the sayings; the words and diction used being in many instances more or less obsolete, and also likely to bear a double meaning.

I have romanised each saying and made a very free translation; in the latter, so far as I know how, giving what the native Malay understands to be meant; this seemed preferable to a more literal rendering as that would not so easily convey the meaning.

The sayings are more or less arranged in progressive sequence, as they seemed to suit the case as it occurred in the Negri Sembilan; first inhabited by Sakais, then gradually colonized by Malays, who, as they increased, amalgamated their own customs with those of the Aborigines, and ultimately brought their Settlement to the dignity of a State, with a Raja chief, whose principal duty was to administer the Mohammadan laws, but with due regard to the Ancient Customs, many of which are very opposite to what is understood by the Law of the Prophet.

I have used the collective name Sakai here, as the Malays commonly do, to express all the different sections of the Aboriginal tribes, whether true Sakais, Jakuns, Mantras, Semangs or any others.

The State of Rembow is particularly interesting at the present time, being in a transitory stage as to customary laws. The people are of course professed Mohammadans, but they are at the same time ashamed to abandon the old fashioned customs of the "*Ada Perpatih*." The incongruity of this was pointed

out to them by the late Sultan of Johor, when for a short time Rembow came under his influence, about eighteen years ago; from what I have heard he most likely laughed at their customs, and advised them that the only way for professed Mohammadans was to follow the "*Adat Tomonggong*," in other words the law of the Prophet. Since that time Rembow customs have greatly changed, and in such matters as debt quarrels, a man may act for his wife instead of her own relations, the law inheritance also follows the code of Islam, so that a man's children may inherit his property instead of his wife's relations.

In spite, however, of these decided advances made by the clever Rembow people they are still behind in some of matters: for instance, the law of marriage is still the law exogamy as in force amongst savages; as the people say it is not lawful to marry within one *pêrul*, or *sa waris*, that is within the limits of a well defined group of families whose common descent is more or less clear from one ancestress who was probably an immigrant from Sumatra several hundred years ago; this is very different from the Mohamadan law on the subject, where the table of affinity is even less comprehensive than it is under Christian rule.

Another Rembow custom, which I expect is almost peculiar to it as a Mohammadan country, is, that a man may not have more than one wife at the same time, except by special authority of the Penghulu; I cannot find out when this custom arose, nor can I find any special saying connected with it; the people can only remember that it always prevailed in Rembow, in accordance with a vow made by a tribal chief in Menangkabau before he and his people migrated to Rembow. At any rate the idea has taken such strong hold of the people, that although when the late Sultan of Johor came to Rembow, as before stated, he ridiculed the custom as opposed to the teaching of Islamism, the people still hold by what has been handed down to them by their ancestors, and I understand that even to-day there are only three men in Rembow with more than one wife.

## 1

سڊانكڻغ برڀوڀي	*	ايرسڪنتڻغ سلوبوق
تڻفت اوڻڪا برڊايو	*	سيامڻغ برجاواة

باتين ڀڻغ امڦوپاڻ

Ayer sa'gantang sa'lobok,  
Sa'dangkang yang ber-bunyi'  
Siamang ber-jawat-jawat,  
Tompas ungka ber-dayu-dayu ;  
Batin yang ampunya-nya.

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From every pool a gallon of water,  
The frogs that croak ;  
The gibbons that travel from hill to hill  
And the places of their noisy councils,  
All these belong to the Sakai chief.

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The Sakai who first enunciated the theory contained in this description of his rights must have been far advanced in the imaginative power so well displayed in the story of Sri Rama, told by Mir Hasan and published by Mr. Maxwell in the Journal of the Society : or perhaps it was a Malay who made it up with the intention of putting on record that after all the Sakaies could only claim a little water in the recesses of the jungle where unclean beasts dwell.

The Sakaies of today seem to wish for very little else, and all efforts to civilize them are unsuccessful ; they are the least harmful of all savage races and are bound to retire before civilization, even if only the civilization of Malays, luckily there is still plenty of room for them in the forests of the Peninsula.



## 2

سلسيله كهوتن \* ترومبا كلوا

Sal-silah ka-hutan,  
Tromba ka-loak.

The Genealogies belong to the Sakais  
But the written account of them to the Malays.

This is a very curious expression, Sal-silah is distinctly Arabic, and one is forced to imagine that Malays taught by Arab traders in the olden times invented the saying by way of flattering the Sakais.

The tradition is that the "Undang yang empat" i. e. the four principal Lawgivers or Penghulus of the Negri Sembilan, are descendants of a Malay chief who settled on the Moar river and married one or more Sakai princesses, and by that means came into the possession of a good slice of the Peninsula, including the present Negri Sembilan, Sungei Ujong, Klang, parts of Pahang, Nanning, Moar, and Jelebu. The Penghulus of Johol and Ulu Moar are the only two left of the "Undang yang empat" whose jurisdiction still to some extent follows the ancient customs; when new Penghulus of Johol and Ulu Moar are appointed, the Batins or Sakai chiefs have a strong voice in the matter, as they are supposed to be the people who know most about the legitimate descent; reciprocally the Penghulus confirm newly appointed Batins.

## 3

كلوخ كوتوغ \* بوكيت باكو  
واريس دان قههولو \* يغامشون

Gaung guntung, bukit bakau,  
Waris dan Penghulu yang ampunya-nya.

The stream heads and narrow valleys,  
The hills and the surrounding plains  
Are the property of the chief and people of the Waris  
tribe. (i. e. Bidwanda).

The claim here set forth by the first settlers in the original Sakai country embraces the whole country side, to the effectual exclusion of the Sakais, who themselves tacitly acquiesce in it, by gradually retiring to the more remote jungle-covered hills without any protest.

The Waris tribe were the first-comers, followers of a chief, who followed their chief's example and intermarried with the Sakai race; therefore as the land belonged originally to their Sakai wives, the custom is still in force in the Negri Sembilan, that all ancestral land shall be held by the women.

The census taken in 1891 shewed that the Malay population in Rembau was much more dense than in any other of the protected Native States, and that it was the only State in which the native women outnumbered the native men; in Rembau not one per cent of the native customary holdings are registered as the property of men. I believe the same thing obtains in Nanning of Malacca, where the customs are very similar.

The Johol chief, Dato Johol Johan Pahlawan Lela Perkasa Setia Wan, is to this day, although a man, to some degree looked upon as a woman, and in consequence except to pay homage to his suzerain he is not supposed to leave his house for any purpose of administering justice or attending ceremonies. Of the Undang yang ampat who first administered the Negri Sembilan, one of them, the youngest, was a woman, who settled in Johol. As a further mark of his feminine attributes he always wears his hair long.

Although the Sakais have given up the land to the Malays, they still, as shown under No. 2, retain the right—or the semblance of it—of appointing the Undang or Penghulu; themselves being in turn confirmed by the Penghulu when appointed as Batins by their people.

## 4

فونوس تبوس كفا اونداغ	*	ناكي كايو باتين جنغ
لتا برنوكول	*	جنگا برايلى
امس برناهيل		

Taki Kayu Batin Jenang  
 Putus tebus kapada Undang  
 Jengka ber-elak  
 Lantak per-tukul  
 Amas ber-tahil.

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The trees are blazed by the Batin and the Senang.  
 But the price is paid to the Penghulu.  
 The land is measured,  
 The boundary posts are planted,  
 The gold is weighed out.

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It is to be understood that the Batin is the purely Sakai chief, the Undang or Penghulu the purely Malay chief, the Jenang is the Penghulu's officer, appointed by him as his Departmental chief for Sakai affairs; it is his duty to *kra* the Sakais for any important matter, to act as intermediary and conduct all negotiations between the two races. This saying describes the system of the alienation of the land from the Sakais to the Malays of the Waris or Bidwanda tribe; and the subsequent selling of blocks by the Waris to the different tribes. The saying by itself does not very clearly express all that, but in practice it soon becomes evident; the first two lines describing how the land was acquired by the first Malay settlers from the Sakais,—with whom they were very closely connected by marriages between Mohamadan Malay men and Sakai women—I do not suppose the reverse ever occurred, or if it did it was very rare; it has now become merely a legend, as the Malays of the Waris tribe now claim the right to all waste lands, which claim the Sakais tacitly admit. It seems very evident, why, although the land was sold by the Sakais to the Malays, the Malay chief received

payment; he was of high descent on the mother's side and the Sakaies therefore trusted him to look after their interests in the alienation of the lands; although he actually received payment, it was as much for the benefit of the Sakais as of himself.

In the same way, the three lines following describe how in most of the States the different tribes have their allotted portions of the waste lands, within which they should as much as possible arrange holdings for their respective tribes-women; but this has also been a good deal ignored and the tribes' holdings have got mixed up: what has, however, survived of all this is the custom, of the Lembagas of both tribes being present when land is transferred from one tribe or section of a tribe to another, and this custom, which is rigorously insisted upon under the present rule, has proved most useful; no registration of any land dealings being effected unless the custom has been satisfactorily fulfilled and attested by the respective tribal chiefs.

## 5

سيغكه تانه تر باليق	*	سهلي اكر فوتوس
سهيا يغامشون	*	سبانغ كا يوربه

Sa halei akar putus  
 Sa bingkah tanah ter-balik  
 Sa batang kayu rebah  
 Sahya yang ampunya-nya.

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A trail of liana was broken,  
 A sod was turned over,  
 A tree was cut down,  
 It was I who made the clearing.

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The speaker, who in support of his claim recites this "perbilongan," or saying, seeks to prove that he was the first to open a certain district; he would probably be a man with some followers, who, for a reason had migrated from the settled lands to find a fresh place and cut out for himself a new clearing in the primeval forest.

The land is God's, the Raja adminsters it for the benefit of the community; the man who squats on it has only the right to his usufruct, and if he does not make it produce he has no good claim to hold it. In a disputed claim, it is evident that he who can prove himself to be the first who brought the land into cultivation has the best title to it; therefore if he can prove that he felled the first tree of the clearing, cut the first rattan or creeper to tie a fence, and turned the first sod to plant it, his contention is a strong one.

## 6

نور يغ ساكا	*	فینگ نن کایوه
نینی مو یغ سهیا یغ فون بوکار	*	جیره یغ فنجغ
Pinang nen gaya		
Nior yang saka		
Jirat yang panjang		
Ninek moyang sahya yang		
ter-muka'an (punya buka'an).		

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The areca and coconut palms are so tall that they are blown about by the winds;

The line of graves is lengthened out:

It was my fore-fathers who planted them all.

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This saying is also recited in claiming land in dispute; but in a different sense to that of the last, which is urged in support of a claim to a district, as having been the first settler. In this case the claimant seeks to prove that the holding is ancestral property and bases his claim upon work done and evidence left by his progenitors.

In land disputes I have always found it most useful to prove who planted cocoanut trees, and who were actually buried in the grave-yard which is found at the back of nearly all old holdings.

## 7

سليمغ تانه ملايو \* سيليلية فولو فرج  
 برتالي كسيباق \* براج كجوهور  
 برنوان كمنغكابو

Sa lilit Pulan Pricha (Percha.)

Sa limbong tanah Malayu,

Ber-raja ka-Johor :

Ber-tali ka-Siak ;

Ber-tuan ka-Menangkabau.

The Malays of all countries acknowledge the Yam Tuan of Parga Ruyong in Menangkabau as their suzerain, but that they have a Raja in Johor and that they are dependent on Siak.

Although the saying infers that all Malays acknowledge the above, it no doubt originated from the Negri Sembilan and refers to that State alone. The "Undang yang empat" or four Penghulus of the original Negri Sembilan, finding that they required a Sultan to administer the Government, especially the religious law ; first sent to Johor, from whence they were passed on to Menangkabau by the way of Siak. The story of the adventures and ultimate success of the embassy has already been told by other writers both Malay and European.

## 8

هولو اير مرانجيج \* كوالا اومبق مچه  
 راج دان فغهولو يغ امفويان \* ساواه يغ برجنجغ فينجغ يغ برجيجي  
 لمباك يغامفويان

Hulu ayer merinching. Kwala ombak mēmecha ;

Raja dan Pēnghulu yang ampunya-nya.

Sawah yang berjenjang, pinang yang ber-jijik,

Lembaga yang ampunya-nya.



From the source where the waters trickle down,  
 To the mouth where the waves break,  
 The Raja and Penghulu shall govern the land.  
 But where the padi fields are laid out,  
 And the areca nut palms are planted in rows,  
 The Lembaga shall rule his tribe.

The Bidwanda tribe, who glory in their descent from the Sakaies, provide the Penghulu, they are the tribes of the soil, and from them other immigrant tribes may purchase the right to use the land for their sustenance.

In the Negri Sembilan it was the Bidwanda Penghulu and this mixed Malay and Sakai people, who, being converted to Islamism, required a Sultan as the Mohammadan law-giver and sent an Embassy to Menangkabau to procure one. Then the Sultan and the Penghulu together governed the country, the Sultan doing his best to carry out the law of the Prophet—Hukum Sharak—and the Penghulus, whilst acknowledging that law and bowing to it, maintaining the Aboriginal cult by the encouragement of Fetishism, through the Pawangs, and the customs of the tribes—Hukum Adat—who had come to their state, by allowing the Lembagas to act as petty magistrates, and give decisions in accordance; which more often than not, especially on such questions as marriage inheritance, and the settlement of debt disputes, are not at all on the same level as the Mohammadan law.

## 9

نکري برقهولو	*	عالم براج
انق بواه برايوا باف	*	سوکو برتوا
برتمقه سمندا	*	اوراغ سمندا
فراهو برتمباتن	*	داکغ برتمباتن

Alam ber-Raja, negri ber-Penghulu,  
 Suku ber-Tua, Anak-buah ber-Ibu-bapa,  
 Orang sa-manda ber-tompat sa-manda,  
 Dagang ber-tapatan, prahu ber-tambatan.

States have their Rajas,  
 And Provinces their Penghulus,  
 Each tribe its Lembaga  
 And each family its elder.  
 Every married man has his wife's  
 Relations to assist him to his rights,  
 And strangers go to the chief whose duty  
 It is to attend their affairs;  
 As also theirs is a place to tie up their prahus.

Thus is defined, in reverse order, the right of Appeal and the Immigration Department.

A well ordered State under the Menangkabau code—Adat Perpateh—should be provided with a properly defined wharf, where there are berths for vessels of different nations. There should be a proper Minister to look after foreigners; he may be called Dato' Dagang, or there may be four office holders, called Dato' Dagang yang ber-ampat abbreviated to 'To Ampat.

The Court of first instance for a married man is the family of his wife; he having left his own home and gone to live with his wife, whose mother he accepts in the place of his own; in other words, he is of one mother (Sa-manda) with his wife after he has married. If a man does not obtain satisfaction from his wife's relations, he as, well as all other unmarried people and married women, take their complaints to the elder of their own particular section (perut) of their own tribe, to the Ibu-bapa (literally mother-father) corrupted to Bwapa; from thence the appeal is to the Lembaga (called Tua or old man) of the whole tribe or Suku; the next court is that of the Penghulu or Undang; and the last appeal is to the Raja of the State, called in accordance with old custom Yang-di-per-Tuan, which title has been shortened to Yam-Tuan.

## 10

اونداغ ركلتاسن \*

لمباك برسكت

Lembaga ber-sekat,  
 Undang ber-ka-lantasan.

The Lembagas jurisdiction is confined to his tribe, (tingkongan.)

But the Undang may carry the case on, i.e. to the Raja or last appeal; or he may hear it in conjunction with the other Penghulus of the State first.

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Thus is defined their respective jurisdiction.

A most important detail in the old administration of the Negri Sembilan, and probably of all Malay States, was the higher consideration shewn to the Waris tribe or Bidwandas, than to the other tribes or Sukes; I found evidence of this in Perak ten years ago, "Waris Kinta" and "Waris Bukit Gantang" meant much amongst the natives, although little was left of the Waris supremacy in the administration of the State.

The incidence of the Penal laws weighed much heavier on the tribes or sukuks than on the heirs of the soil; and although, as has occurred in some instances, important and energetic persons from other tribes and even Arabs, have succeeded in obtaining Peughuluships, as a heritage for their tribes; it has, I think, invariably been the custom that they should marry a Bidwanda woman.

## 11

دافاتن تشکل \*

جاري باكي

باوا كمبالي

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Chari, bagi  
Dapatan, tingal;  
Bawa Kembalik.

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Joint earnings shall be divided.

The wife's (ancestral) property shall restored to her tribe.  
And the husband's taken back to his.

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This is custom which governs the division of the property of married people when a divorce occurs, or at the death of

either party. It is the whole law of Malay entail and marriage settlements in a nut-shell.

When a marriage is arranged, it is the duty of the elders of the two tribes to see that the real and personal estate of both sides to the contract, is carefully enumerated before witnesses; then at the dissolution of the marriage, the elders should arrange that the joint earnings during the married life of the parties are equally divided; that the wife's representatives get back what she brought into the contract and the husband his share, It may be imagined that as no written record is kept, the account becomes somewhat confused and quarrels ensue.

## 12

\* اونغ ممباير

\* اوله نفقة سمندا

كوسوة مپلي كن

فيونغ منريما كن

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Kusut menyisikan,  
Utong membiar, pintong menerimakan,  
Oleh tompat samanda.

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To arrange all quarrels,  
Pay all debts and receive what is due,  
Is the business of the wife's relations.

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The married man, as shewn in this and the next saying, would seem to be rather at a disadvantage; he is merely a man married into the family all his quarrels and debts have to be settled by his wife's relatives, and all debts due to him are collected by them. This seems after all pretty fair under the Menangkabau code, which, in exchange for the actual labour done in the rice fields by the women, exalts them to the position of actual owners of the usufruct of their holdings under the Raja as paramount lord.

## 13

اوراغ سمندا برقمقه سمندا \* جک چردیق تن برونديغ  
 جک بودوه دسوروه دي اراه \* تیغکی بانیه نمقه برلندوغ  
 ربیون داون نمقه برناوغ

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Orang sa manda ber-tompat sa-manda :  
 Iika cherdek teman be-eunding.  
 Iika bodok di suroh dia arah ;  
 Tinggi baneh tompat ber-lindong,  
 Rimbun down tompat ber-na'ung.

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The married man shall be subservient to his mother-in-law :  
 If he is clever I will try to cajole him,  
 If he is stupid I will see that he works ;  
 Like the buttresses of a big tree he shall shelter me.  
 Like the thick foliage he shall shade me.

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One can imagine the satisfaction a Malay mother derives from thinking over this saying, and reciting it to her cronies and her daughter when she has made up her mind to receive a son-in-law into her family ; be he sharp or slow, clever or stupid, either way she cannot be a loser. Her daughter's house will be built behind her own ; if the man is clever he will get enough money to build the house by easy means ; if he is stupid she will so bully him that the poor man will be glad to labour with his hands at her bidding ; it would seem to the anxious mother that she and her daughter cannot but be gainers by the contract ; perhaps they forget for the time that there is another side to the question, namely that they may have to pay his gambling debts.

## 14

داراه ستيتيق داكيغ سراجي \* برتالي كفدا باف

Darah Sa-titik, daging sa-rachik Ber-tali Kapada bapa.

For a drop of blood, and morsel of flesh, one is still indebted to one's father.

This is equal to saying, that, although the women are the most important members of the community as holders of the entailed property, one is still indebted to one's father for mere existence; the axiom is a little plea for the mere man, after all the tendency that has been shewn by the Adat Perpateh to glorify the woman by making her the nominal owner of the soil.

It is not nowever surprising that the woman should have a large share of importance in the tribe, as every body who has read or heard related the old tradition of "Dato' Per-pateh pin-nag sa-batang" will understand. Perhaps after all it was not the heroism displayed by a particular woman under trying circumstances, that decided the ancient chief to fix the land of entail in the female him of descent; so much as it was the difficulty in determining in lawless times the paternity of any given child, the maternity would be easier to decide.

## 15

هيلغ داراه \* كنتي داراه

Hilang darah, ganti darah.

Blood for blood.

This on the face of it, is evidently the old Mosaic law—"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; but primitive Malays were not so wasteful of blood and life as to exact capital punishment except in very flagrant cases.

The expression is explained by numbers 16 and 17 following.



## 16

بونوه بالاس \*

چينچانغ فمئس

Chinchang pëmpas, bunoh balas.

For a wound the price of it in blood,

For a murder a life.

The blood to be spilt in compensation for a wound inflicted, might be that of a fowl, a goat or a buffalo, according to the more or less serious nature of it; also according to the means of the culprit and the power of the offended party to exact payment; in any case the animal or some part of it would go to provide a feast of reconciliation.

The life to be paid for a murder rarely meant amongst Malays that the murderer was necessarily executed; it was more often the adoption by the family of the murdered person of a member of the murderer's family, or it was a slave passed over by them in compensation for the loss incurred. As I have already pointed out the compensation to the Waris or Bidwanda tribe was heavier than that paid for the death of a member of what may be termed a tribe of immigrants. When I first came to Rembau some very old debts were sued for in my Court, in the hopes that the white man would be strong enough to exact payment where the native chief had failed; on investigation some of these proved to be judgements inflicted for assaults and even murder or man slaughter.

In Rembau for the death of a Bidwanda, or Waris the life penalty was exacted: but for the death of a tribesman the penalty was a buffalo, 50 gantongs of rice and "wang dua bhara" (i. e. \$28-40): the money to be divided amongst the relatives of the murdered man, and the buffalo and rice to provide a feast to reconcile the tribes of the murderer and his victim.

## 17

انق دثغكيل ماكن \* انق بواه دسوروغكن بالس

Anak di-panggil makan, Anak-buah di sorongkan balas.

The son is called to the feast, But the nephew pays the debt.

This explains more fully how the debt of a life for a life is paid.

The Menangkabau code as understood here provides for succession first in the tribe and next in the family; it would seem absurd to a primitive people;—Amongst whom sexual relations were not properly governed by even the laxly carried out Mohamadan laws of marriage and divorce,—that property, which amongst all savage races is more valuable than life, should descend from father to son, when no man could with certainty claim an individual as his off-spring; it was, evident that the landed property should be held by the women who, being proud of the ownerships, would not hesitate to expend labour on it: it therefore comes about that when a man of one tribe marries a woman of another, he becomes a sort of lodger in his wife's house, her family and her tribe; the children that his wife may bear to him are not so much his children as the children of his wife's tribe; they may inherit, as explained under No. 11., whatever he and his wife earned together during their married life; but his wife's tribe have too strong a claim on them, to allow them to be taken from the tribe in payment for a crime committed by their father, who is an outsider; if he murders a man he must find a relation of his own blood and tribe to pay the debt; and as when he dies his nephew will inherit his personal estate and any office or title which he may hold in the tribe, it seemed proper that his nephew should pay his blood debt.

## 18

تالي فغيكه درفدا لمباك \* کريس فپالغ درفدا اونداغ  
فداغ فرمنچوغ درفدا کعاديلن

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Tali pengikat deripada lembaga,  
Kris penyalang deripada undang,  
Pedang permanchong deripada ka'adilan.

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The Lembaga shall bind the culprit,  
The Penghulu shall kris him,  
The Sultan only may behead him.

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It is the duty of the tribal chief—after he has done every thing he can to protect his tribesman from the consequences of his guilt,—to bring him before the tribunal, and if the death sentence is passed, to bind him; although in Sarawak and other Malay countries I understand that when a man is krisped he is not bound. The Undang is a less powerful person than the Sultan, therefore if he passes a death sentence the execution is carried out with the kris most carefully, in order that not a drop of blood may be spilt on the ground, which would be against the popular traditions. The Sultan on the other hand is not subject to these niceties and therefore is empowered to behead with the sword.